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**OFFICE OF PETITIONS**

In re Application of

Neilson

Application No. 10/811,606

Filed: 29 March, 2004

Attorney Docket No. 34597.3

ON PETITION

This is a decision on the renewed petition filed on 23 March, 2005, to revive the above-identified application under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) as abandoned due to unintentional delay.

For the reasons set forth below, the petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) is **GRANTED**.

**BACKGROUND**

The record reflects that:

- Petitioner failed to reply timely and properly to the Notice to File Missing Parts (oath/declaration) mailed on 9 June, 2004, with a reply due, absent a request and fee for extension of time, on or before Monday, 9 August, 2004;
- the application went abandoned by operation of law after midnight 9 August, 2004;
- the Office mailed a Notice of Abandonment on 14 March, 2005;
- with the instant petition with fee, Petitioner filed an oath/declaration, surcharge, and made the statement of unintentional delay.

### STATUTES, REGULATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Congress has authorized the Commissioner to "revive an application if the delay is shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner to have been "unavoidable." 35 U.S.C. §133 (1994).<sup>1</sup>

The regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) and (b) set forth the requirements for a petitioner to revive a previously unavoidably or unintentionally, respectively, abandoned application under this congressional grant of authority.

The language of 35 U.S.C. §133 and 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) is clear, unambiguous, and without qualification: the delay in tendering the reply to the outstanding Office action, as well as filing the first petition seeking revival, must have been unavoidable for the reply now to be accepted on petition.<sup>2</sup> Delays in responding properly raise the question whether delays are unavoidable.<sup>3</sup> Where there is a question whether the delay was unavoidable, Petitioners must meet the burden of establishing that the delay was unavoidable within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §133 and 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a).<sup>4</sup>

And the Petitioner must be diligent in attending to the matter.<sup>5</sup> Failure to do so does not constitute the care required under Pratt, and so cannot satisfy the test for diligence and due care. By contrast, unintentional delays are those that do not satisfy the very strict statutory and regulatory requirements of unavoidable delay, and also, by definition, are not intentional.

Petitioner has satisfied the requirements of 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b).

### CONCLUSION

Therefore, the instant petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) hereby is **granted**.

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<sup>1</sup> 35 U.S.C. §133 provides:

**35 U.S.C. §133 Time for prosecuting application.**

Upon failure of the applicant to prosecute the application within six months after any action therein, of which notice has been given or mailed to the applicant, or within such shorter time, not less than thirty days, as fixed by the Commissioner in such action, the application shall be regarded as abandoned by the parties thereto, unless it be shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that such delay was unavoidable.

<sup>2</sup> Therefore, by example, an unavoidable delay in the payment of the Filing Fee might occur if a reply is shipped by the US Postal Service, but due to catastrophic accident, the delivery is not made.

<sup>3</sup> See: *Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure; Final Rule Notice*, 62 Fed. Reg. at 53158-59 (October 10, 1997), 1203 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office at 86-87 (October 21, 1997).

<sup>4</sup> See: *In re Application of G*, 11 USPQ2d 1378, 1380 (Comm'r Pats. 1989).

<sup>5</sup> See: *Diligence in Filing Petitions to Revive and Petitions to Withdraw the Holding of Abandonment*, 1124 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office 33 (March 19, 1991). It was and is Petitioner's burden to exercise diligence in seeking either to have the holding of abandonment withdrawn or the application revived. See 1124 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office *supra*.

The instant application is released to OIPE for further processing as necessary before being forwarded for examination in due course.

Telephone inquiries concerning this decision may be directed to the undersigned at (571) 272-3214.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop followed by a horizontal stroke extending to the right.

John J. Gillon, Jr.  
Senior Attorney  
Office of Petitions